

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1034

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NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, MARR, NATO, PFOR, IC, NO, UK

SUBJECT: UK/ICELANDIC FISHERIES DISPUTE: EXPANDED NORWEGIAN PROPOSAL

REFS: (A) OSLO 1015, (B) OSLO 0996, (C) OSLO 0978, (D) OSLO 0954

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER
FRYDENLUND

IN COPENHAGEN FEB 29 THAT ICELAND COULD NOT NEGOTIATE ON THE
FISHERY DISPUTE. BUT HALLGRIMSSON AGREED TO EXPLORE A NEW
PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD INVOLVE WITHDRAWAL OF UK FRIGATES AND
SET A LIMIT OF 15 UK TRAWLERS IN THE ICE-
LANDIC FISHING ZONE IN EXCHANGE FOR EXPLICIT OR TACIT ICELANDIC
AGREEMENT THAT THE SHIPS WOULD NOT BE HARRASSED. FRYDENLUND
HAS OUTLINED THE PROPOSAL TO UK AMBASSADOR IN OSLO AND AWAITS
UK REACTION BEFORE TALKING AGAIN WITH HALLGRIMSSON. HE URGED
ME NOT REPEAT NOT TO DISCUSS THE PROPOSAL AT THIS TIME WITH
ANYONE OUTSIDE US GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY

1. FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND OUTLINED FOR ME ON MARCH 1
RESULTS OF HIS CONVERSATION ON FEB 29 WITH ICELANDIC PRIME
MINISTER HALLGRIMSSON ON ICELANDIC-UK FISHERMEN'S DISPUTE. HE
SAID HE WAS TELLING ME OF THE CONVERSATION IN STRICTEST CONFIDENTIAL

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DENCE, FOR HALLGRIMSSON TOLD HIM THAT WERE THE SUBSTANCE OF

THEIR DISCUSSION OR THE IMPRESSION THAT HALLGRIMSSON WAS NEGOTIATING THE MATTER IN ANY WAY TO LEAK OUT, NOT ONLY WAS ANY HOPE OF RESOLVING THE ISSUE LOST BUT THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF WOULD BE POLITICALLY JEOPARDIZED.

2. FRYDENLUND SAID FROM HIS TALK WITH HALLGRIMSSON AND CONVERSATION AGAIN WITH HIM MARCH 1 ON TELEPHONE HE COULD ONLY DIAGNOSE THE FISHERY DISPUTE AS A "PSYCHOSIS" IN ICELAND. HALLGRIMSSON SAID THAT HE COULD NOT AGREE TO THE NORWEGIAN PROPOSAL FOR BRINGING THE PARTIES TOGETHER BECAUSE IN THE PRESENT DOMESTIC CLIMATE THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT SIMPLY COULD NOT NEGOTIATE ON THE ISSUE. THE CABINET MEMBERS COULD NOT AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES TO NEGOTIATE. HALLGRIMSSON EXPRESSED STRONGLY HIS FEAR THAT ALL IT WILL TAKE IS ANOTHER INCIDENT AT SEA AND THE NATO FACILITY WILL BE THE NEXT TARGET IN ICELAND.

3. HALLGRIMSSON SAID HE WISHED TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT AND HE ENCOURAGED FRYDENLUND TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS TOWARD ONE WITHOUT PROMISING THE FOREIGN MINISTER HE WOULD AGREE TO ANY PROPOSAL. IN THEIR TALK HALLGRIMSSON AND FRYDENLUND SHAPED ANOTHER PROPOSAL THAT HALLGRIMSSON SAID HE WAS PREPARED TO TAKE HOME, ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: THE UK WOULD AGREE TO WITHDRAW ITS FRIGATES AND ALL BUT 15 OF ITS TRAWLERS FROM THE ICELANDIC 200-MILE FISHERY ZONE. IN TURN HALLGRIMSSON WOULD SEEK TO OBTAIN ICELANDIC ASSURANCE, EITHER EXPLICIT BUT MOST LIKELY TACIT, THAT THESE SHIPS WOULD NOT BE HARRASSED. TO PROTECT HALLGRIMSSON AT HOME THEY AGREED PROPOSAL WOULD BE PRESENTED AS FRYDENLUND'S.

4. HALLGRIMSSON SAID HE THOUGHT THAT AS THINGS ARE NOW THIS SHOULD BE A REASONABLE DEAL FOR THE UK, SINCE THEIR FISH CATCH UNDER THE EXISTING SITUATION PROBABLY WILL NOT EXCEED QUANTITY WHICH 15 TRAWLERS COULD TAKE OR THAT ANY POSSIBLE NEGOTIATION WOULD YIELD. UNDER SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT, HE FELT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO MAKE IT TO THE LOS CONFERENCE THIS FALL WHICH HOPEFULLY WOULD FINALLY RESOLVE THE MATTER.

5. HALLGRIMSSON REITERATED TO FRYDENLUND THAT HE WAS NOT SURE HE COULD DELIVER ON THIS ARRANGEMENT BUT HE WAS WILLING TO TRY. CONFIDENTIAL

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HE SAID IT WILL NEVER SELL IF THE BRITISH SEEK TO NEGOTIATE THE NUMBER OF SHIPS UPWARD. HALLGRIMSSON WOULD RAISE THE IDEA IN REYKJAVIK WHEN HE RETURNED FROM COPENHAGEN, NOW SCHEDULED MARCH 3, ASSUMING BRITISH HAVE GIVEN FRYDENLUND A POSITIVE REACTION.

6. FRYDENLUND HAS INFORMED UK AMBASSADOR SCOTT IN OSLO ABOUT HIS DISCUSSION WITH HALLGRIMSSON AND AWAITS BRITISH REACTION, HOPEFULLY ON MARCH 2. FRYDENLUND WILL THEN CONTACT HALLGRIMSSON.

7. FRYDENLUND WAS CONSIDERING NOW BEST WAY TO FLOA THE PROPOSAL
IF BOTH SIDES TO AGREE ON IT. HE SAID HE COULD RAISE THE MATTER
HIMSELF, OR PREFERAABLY, HE SAID, ARRANGEMENTS COULD BE MADE
TO BRING THE MATTER OUT OF NATO FORUM THROUGH LUNS. HE SAID
HE THOUGH HALLGRIMSSON WOULD BE AMENABLE TO THE NATO
APPROACH. BUT AT THIS POINT, HE IS NOW AWAITING UK AND
ICELANDIC REACTION TO THE NEW ALTERNATIVE.
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